

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 083001
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TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

UNCLAS STATE 083001

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 083001

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: FPFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 30, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL
VERSION WILL FOLLOW:

Q: JOHN, HOW ABOUT CUBANS AND RUSSIANS IN ETHIOPIA LEAVING,
OR IN MOZAMBIQUE COMING IN?

A: WHY DON'T I SAY THAT WHEN WE KNOW THERE HAS BEEN A
CHANGE IN WHAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAY ON IT IN THE LAST
WEEK OR SO, WE WILL LET YOU KNOW.

Q: WELL, ABC HAD A RATHER COMPLETE REPORT LAST NIGHT. I
DON'T KNOW IF YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED ABOUT IT BEFORE THEY WENT
ON THE AIR, BUT THEY WENT ON LAST NIGHT WITH A DIAGRAM OF
THE PLACES OF ENTRY, THE FOUR KEY POINTS OF ENTRY, INTO
MOZAMBIQUE.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO UP-DATE YOUR FIGURES ON CUBANS AND
RUSSIANS IN MOZAMBIQUE?

A: NO.

Q: NOR THE INDICATIONS THAT IT WAS LEARNED THAT DOBRYNIN
GAVE THE SECRETARY OF STATE BRINGING DOWN THE CUBAN
STRENGTH IN ETHIOPIA. HAVE THOSE INDICATIONS BEEN BORN
OUT BY FACT YET?

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 083001

A: I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON ANY OF THAT.

Q: ANY WORD ON MR. LEFEVRE?

A: YES, I WAS GOING TO GIVE YOU MR. LEFEVRE'S LATEST
DEVELOPMENTS.

HE HAS BEEN RELEASED BY THE NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES. THIS
IS THE AMERICAN CITIZEN WHO HAS BEEN HELD UNDER DETENTION
BY THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA. HE WAS RELEASED BY THE
NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES ON MARCH 30 AFTER THE PAYMENT OF
APPROXIMATELY 7,500 DOLLARS BAIL, AND HIS CASE HAS BEEN
POSTPONED UNTIL APRIL 25; THAT IS, I THINK THE HEARING
OF THE CASE.

HE WAS VISITED BY A CONSULAR OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES
IN JAIL TODAY, AND HE WAS REPORTED TO BE IN GOOD
SPIRITS, AND SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN TREATED HUMANELY
DURING THE TIME HE HAD BEEN IN DETENTION.

Q: JOHN, WHAT IS HE CHARGED WITH?

A: THE CHARGES AS FAR AS I KNOW, HAVE NOT BEEN MADE CLEAR.

Q: DO YOU KNOW IF HIS LAWYER HAS BEEN RELEASED?

A: I DON'T KNOW.

Q: BEYOND ITS NOT BEING CLEAR, HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING ON THE CHARGES AT ALL?

A: I THINK I AM PROBABLY CONSTRAINED BY THE PRIVACY ACT POLICY. I'LL SEE.

Q: COULD YOU COMMENT ON THE REPORT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 083001

A NUMBER OF THESE INCIDENTS RECENTLY WHERE AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN OR AMERICAN CITIZENS IN NIGERIA HAVE BEEN DETAINED, AND WHERE CONSULAR ACCESS HAS BEEN DENIED OR AT LEAST GRANTED GRUDGINGLY AFTER VERY LONG DELAYS IN NIGERIA?

A: NOTHING OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT WE REGRET THAT WE ARE NOT NOTIFIED OF THE DETENTION OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN IN NIGERIA, AND THAT WE DON'T GET PROMPT CONSULAR ACCESS TO THEM. I DON'T WANT TO MAKE A BIG THING OUT OF IT, BUT OBVIOUSLY IT WOULD BE MORE HELPFUL IF WE COULD GET THE NOTIFICATION AND GET THE PROPER ACCESS.

Q: BEYOND THE ORDINARY CONSULAR ACCESS OR NON-ACCESS, DID WE MAKE ANY REPRESENTATION AT A HIGHER LEVEL TO THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT, GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS AIRBORNE AND IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO RELEASE THIS GUY?

A: NO, I DON'T BELIEVE WE DID.

Q: THAT IS NOT TRUE, JOHN. YOU SAID YESTERDAY THAT IT WAS TAKEN UP WITH MOOSE, BETWEEN MOOSE AND THE NIGERIAN CHARGE.

A: THAT IS CORRECT. WE DID TAKE IT UP. NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS EXPRESSED. I AM SAYING, IN ANSWER TO SCOTT'S QUESTION, I DON'T KNOW THAT THAT IDEA WAS SUGGESTED TO ANYBODY IN THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT, WHAT YOU ARE SUGGESTING.

Q: WOULD IT AMAZE YOU IF IT WASN'T?

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 083001

A: NOT NECESSARILY.

Q: JOHN, WOULD THERE HAVE BEEN SUCH AN URGENCY IF
THE PRESIDENT WERE NOT GOING TO NIGERIA AT THIS TIME IN
THIS CASE?

A: I THINK SO, YES. I WOULD NOT SEE A DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN OUR CONCERN ABOUT THAT SORT OF A SITUATION,
WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS A HIGH LEVEL VISIT BEING
PLANNED. NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO SITUATIONS.
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